

Application No.: 09/656,677

Docket No.: 65229-0010/GP-301542

REMARKS

Claims 1-42 are pending. Claims 1, 10, 21, 25, 26, 28, 36, 40, and 41 are independent claims. Claims 21, 36, 40, and 41 are amended by way of this response. The Final Office Action (page 2) states that claims 1-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as obvious over, U.S. 6,253,115 ("Martin"). However, in responding to Applicants' arguments (Final Office Action, pages 3-4), the Examiner made clear that claims 1-42 actually are now rejected over a combination of Martin and U.S. 5,355,317 ("Talbott"). Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview with Applicants' representative on January 13, 2005. In that interview, Applicants' representative and the Examiner discussed the applicability of Martin to exemplary claim 1. Agreement was reached that Martin does not read on the step required by claim 1 of "reviewing a manufacturing system design according to design review data..." because Martin discloses at most analyzing a business or manufacturing process. Also in the aforementioned interview, the Examiner suggested certain amendments to claims 21, 36, 40 and 41 to make the preambles to those claims parallel the preamble to claim 1. Such amendments have been made in the present paper, and no alteration in the scope or meaning of the amended claims is intended thereby.

Applicants' representative also noted that the Final Office Action appeared to advance a new ground of rejection, although Applicants did not, in their September 14, 2004 response to the previous Office Action, amend any claims. Specifically, claims 1-42 were previously rejected as anticipated by, or alternatively, as obvious over, Martin alone. However, page 4 of the Final Office Action makes clear that claims 1-42 now stand rejected over the combination of Martin and Talbott. Accordingly, it was agreed that finality should be withdrawn.

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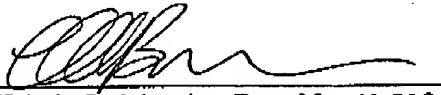
CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are distinguished over the cited prior art and are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or issues relating to Applicants' response, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative.

Any fees associated with the filing of this paper should be identified in an accompanying transmittal. However, if any additional fees are required in connection with the filing of this paper, permission is given to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013, from which the undersigned is authorized to draw, under order number 65229-0010.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 19, 2005

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